

of labeled oligonucleotides of varying types, each oligonucleotide having a base sequence that is complementary to at least one normal base sequence of one of the inspected sites, and each oligonucleotide being labeled to be discriminable from each other for forming duplexes including hetero- and homoduplexes; and

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| (B) a detection step ~~of~~ for detecting said mutation, which  
can be located at any position throughout the base sequence,  
by employing an ion pair chromatograph comprising a reversed phase column serving as a separation column and a detector capable of discriminating and detecting the labeled oligonucleotides, and setting the separation column at a temperature at which there is a difference in stability between the hetero- and homoduplexes included in the duplexes for analyzing the object of analysis.

2. (unchanged) The mutation detecting method according to claim 1, wherein the oligonucleotides are labeled with the fluorescent materials.

3. (unchanged) The mutation detecting method according to claim 1, wherein the separation column is set at the melting temperature of the heteroduplex.

4. (previously amended) The mutation detecting method

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according to claim 1, which further comprises observing a chromatogram of labels obtained through the detection step (B), and thereby determining that an inspected site corresponding to a label is non-mutational due to the presence of a single peak, while further determining that an inspected site corresponding to a label is mutational due to the presence of two peaks.

5. (unchanged) The mutation detecting method according to claim 1, including an amplification step of amplifying the object of analysis in advance of the bonding step (A).

6. (unchanged) The mutation detecting method according to claim 5, wherein the amplification step is a single PCR step.

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#### REMARKS

This paper is filed in response to the final Official Action mailed October 25, 2002, and as a preliminary amendment for consideration with the Request for Continued Examination filed herewith. Reexamination and reconsideration are courteously requested.

Claims 1 to 6 are currently pending for the Examiner's consideration. In the Office Action, the Examiner rejected claims 1 to 6 under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 5,795,976 ("Oefner") in view of U.S.